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October 12, 2012  
Modern Day Slaves

Modern Day Slaves is a 2010 movie by Ted Unarce about the treatment of overseas workers. The film argues that the treatment of overseas workers is unethical by telling the story of four overseas workers (OFW) who were treated poorly. The film uses the stories of the OFW women to appeal emotionally to its audience.

The film addresses a political sustainability problem without stating it directly. In the Philippines, 50% of the families are split because there are no local jobs. This is an enormous problem that will not be solved permanently just by having a few people work overseas. The Filipino government recognizes this as a problem, but is too corrupt to solve it. Governmental corruption is a sustainability problem because corrupt governments cannot reliably make sustainable choices.

The most persuasive part of the film was the fact that neither the Filipino government nor the government of the country where the OFWs were working tried to help the OFWs who were in trouble. The Filipino workers were scared into staying in abusive households by the fear of deportation laws. While the individual stories of abuse were disturbing, they did not give a sense of how widespread modern day slavery is. It would have been better to show a wider range of cases to indicate that the abuse of OFWs is very prevalent.

The film's audience is for people who had never heard of the problems of the OFWs before. The film is very helpful about explaining why so many Filipinos leave their country to find work, and why they have trouble escaping the abusive situations caused by working overseas. This film was created with the intent to discuss sustainability, and is not a very academic film. There is a lot that could be added to the film to discuss environmental impact or other sustainability problems. Firstly, the Philippines is not sustainable, which is the reason that the workers need to find work overseas. Making the Philippines more sustainable would benefit all of the people living there by allowing them to find work within their own country. Secondly, for the countries that the OFWs are going to, treating the foreign workers poorly is not sustainable. Eventually, the Filipinos will decide that traveling to a country where they know they will be abused is not worth going to, and as money begins to flow to the Philippines, fewer Filipino workers will travel abroad.

The film suggests government action to the countries that hire Filipino workers to create stronger legislation to protect OFWs. Although this would improve the condition of OFWs abroad, it would not fix the long term problem of the lack of jobs in the Philippines. A more sustainable solution would require the Philippines to increase the amount of jobs available. To solve the unemployment problem in the Philippines would require creating long term jobs. The Philippines has a 1.8% population growth rate, which contributes to unemployment. The other factor required to solve the Philippine unemployment problem is increasing the amount of money available to start jobs. However, the government takes so much money from the OFWs through corruption that the Filipinos don't have a chance to earn money and change their country.